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# WHAT IS HOMŒOPATHY?

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# WHAT IS HOMŒOPATHY?

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## THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE OF HOMŒOPATHY.

HOMŒOPATHY is *the* philosophical science of medicine, having for its basis, experimental facts. Its fundamental principle is, that every valuable medicine will produce, in a healthy individual, symptoms more or less similar to those of the disease which it is capable of curing. A familiar example of this is found in capsicum, which produces a burning sensation in the throat and stomach, and is a popular remedy in sore throat, some forms of quinsy, and in that affection called the heartburn. Balsam copaiva causes irritation of the urinary passages, and even stranguary, and is used as a remedy for the same affections, when the consequence of disease. These are, therefore homœopathic medicines.

Belladonna is another. The American Dispensatory describes it, as producing "dryness and stricture in the fauces (throat,) and neighboring parts; the face becoming red and tumid, and the mouth and jaws spasmodically affected." In large doses it causes a bright scarlet redness over the whole surface of the body. These symptoms would point it out as a homœopathic remedy in scarlet fever. And so it is. Even the old system, or allœopathy, has recently adopted it, without however recognizing the principle on which it acts, as its most efficient remedy, both as a preventative and cure for that disease.

Mercury is also a homœopathic medicine in those cases where it is most signally useful as a remedy, producing the same symptoms which it is given to cure. Hence, in some cases, it has always been a puzzle to the physician, to determine whether his patient is laboring under the evil effects of his remedy, or requires more to effect a cure.

Vaccination is another illustration of the doctrine of homœopathy. It is the producing of an artificial disease, whose symptoms are mild, but have a resemblance

to those of the small pox, for which it is the substitute, occupying the same vital organization, and rendering it insusceptible to any subsequent attack, the same as though the true disease had been endured.

Homœopathy differs from allopathy in the discovery, that this is the true principle of all judicious medical practice; that, in the words of Hahneman, "to cure in a mild, prompt, safe and durable manner, it is necessary to choose in each case, a medicine that will excite an affection similar to that against which it is employed;"—it is, in fact, the substitution of a set of artificial symptoms, mild in their character—often imperceptible, but sufficient to take possession of the vital organization of the part affected, and displace the symptoms which constitute the disease.

The difference in the principles on which homœopathy and allopathy are founded, may be illustrated by a well known result of practice. A person inordinately exposed to severe cold, freezes his extremities, and on the established principles of homœopathy, applies a remedy whose symptoms resemble those of the disease—plunges the part in ice cold water or envelopes it in snow, and the frost is imperceptibly withdrawn, vitality returns and the functions of the part resume their accustomed activity. This is a homœopathic cure—natural, speedy, and when conducted well, perfect. Allopathy, should it follow the practice it has adopted in other cases, of meeting diseases with medicines of opposite symptoms, would plunge the part in warm water, or envelope it in warm flannel; and mortification and a long tedious sloughing or death would be the inevitable result. But no man of common sense and observation would do so, because, in this case, the effect is so strongly marked and well known.

The treatment of burns is also an illustration of the same point. Let the burn be retained in a heat nearly as great as is compatible with the life of the part, and the pain will gradually diminish; and if the organization has not been destroyed, vitality will return, and health be restored. This is also a homœopathic cure—the symptoms of the remedy resembling those of the disease. If the burn be destructive to organization, local dressings of a warm stimulant character, with ele-

vated temperature, must take the place of the dry heat, to favor the granulating process, that it may repair the injury. But if, instead of heat, cooling applications be made, on the principles alloëopathy adopts in other cases, it will give more instant relief it is true, but the parts that are injured will lose their vitality, sloughing or painful reaction will take place, and the injury be far more severe.

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#### THEORY OF HOMŒOPATHIC DOSES.

Life may be denominated that immaterial principle, or dynamic power, which presides over vital organization, adapting it to the purposes of animal existence ;—and health, an easy, natural performance of all the functions of life. And as our material existence is the controlling power, it is evident that *disease* is, primarily, an affliction of that power, modifying its mode of action and feeling, and in this way deranging the harmony of vitality, and producing a class of symptoms which we call disease. And consequent upon this, there may or may not follow a derangement of the physical organization—a swelling induration, or wasting.

It is the province of homœopathic medicine to obliterate these symptoms, in a natural, easy, and durable manner, without prostrating the powers of life, or in any way interfering with the functions yet unassailed by disease. To accomplish this, the first object of the physician is, thoroughly to investigate the case, and get a perfect picture of all the symptoms fully impressed upon his mind ; and then to select a remedy, the totality of whose symptoms has been found, when administered to a healthy individual, to bear the nearest resemblance to those of the disease.

Every true medicine, in its adaptedness to the physical laws of the animal economy, has specific functions, over which, in its milder operations, it exerts a control in preference to all others,—but, when taken in large doses, it is not restricted by its primitive affinities, but overwhelms the whole vital organization in a general tumultuous action.

When any considerable impression is made on animal

life, it quietly yields itself, for a time, to the impression, and afterward an effort at reaction follows, proportionate to the impression that has been made. If I plunge my hand in ice water for a moment, a healthy glow is all I shall feel,—but if it remain there a much longer time, a most painful reaction will be the result. If I take a powerful stimulant, as ardent spirit, the subsequent depression will be in proportion to the previous excitement. Or if I produce an unnatural impression of any kind, I have interrupted the vital harmony, and excited the irritability of the nervous system, which always reacts upon the disturbing influence in an opposite direction. And the amount and character of this reaction is beyond my control. This is true of the impressions made by medicines in the ordinary doses. If the medicine is rightly chosen, a certain amount only is necessary to meet the symptoms of the disease, and all that is given over, causes but a destructive waste of the powers of life. And here we have the great stumbling block of homœopathic medicine—its doses.

And truly at first thought, it does seem incompatible with common sense, and a belief in it a just subject of ridicule, so widely different are they from the doses we have been accustomed to. And some of the noblest sciences too, in their infancy, encountered the same opposition that homœopathy now does, because so different from all previous experience and theories. But the opposers of homœopathy are either those who have had no opportunity to examine its claims, or those who have deliberately closed their eyes against the science itself, and against all facts that go to sustain it.

Common observation proves that medicines have a greater affinity with the powers of life, than the noxious principles or miasms have, because the former act with certainty, while the latter but occasionally affect those exposed to their influence. If a person take a dose of medicine, he knows it will make an impression on his vitality; but if he be exposed to contagion, the powers of life resist its effects, and it is more doubtful what will be the result. Medicines, therefore have a nearer relation to the vital principle than the noxious agents have, and when given with strict regard to the similarity of their pathogenetic symptoms, (symptoms on a healthy



person,) to the symptoms of the disease, it requires but a very minute dose to take possession of the vital organization and displace the disease. This is the philosophy of homœopathic doses.

As it is the object of homœopathic medicine to *neutralise* the *symptoms* of disease, it selects its remedy with that object only in view; and there must be a similarity of the symptoms of the medicine, ascertained by experiments on healthy individuals, to those of the disease—and the more exact this is, the more perfect will be the cure. The dose is then so arranged in quantity, as just to meet the symptoms and displace them, without expending its energies in prostrating or deranging the powers of life. But it often happens, that there is no one medicine yet discovered, whose pathogenetic symptoms form a perfect picture of those of the disease. The medicine then the nearest to it, and which meets the most important symptoms, must be taken first. And when these symptoms are annihilated, another must be selected to meet other symptoms. And when all the symptoms are gone, it is a truth self evident, that the disease cannot remain.

In every curable case, the first dose of the appropriate medicine will be sure to make an impression on the vitality of the part diseased, which, if not interrupted by too frequent repetitions, nor counteracted by other medicinal substances in the form of diet, &c., will continue its operation a longer or a shorter time, according as the disease is in a passive or active state. In a passive state the effect of this impression is, to obliterate the disease, and then the vital energies come into play, and restore a healthy action. Sometimes one dose is sufficient to obtain a complete victory over a disease of long standing. It establishes its control, and the condition essential to disease ceases, but it may require several weeks for the full establishment of health. And some of the homœopathic medicines continue their operation without being repeated, that length of time. But in acute diseases it is different. The vitality being assailed with so much more energy, the impression of the medicine, instead of neutralizing the symptoms, is soon itself overcome, and must be often repeated till it fully establishes its influence.

Homœopathic medicines, following the analogy of nature, are all specifics;—a definite object with a definite agent, whose effect is directed solely to the labor it has to perform, with power only for its accomplishment. But, laying aside the idea of a specific, and adopting the allopathic practice of opposites,—A person has pain—its opposite (opium,) is given—the pain is not subdued, but stifled by stupor, and will break out again with renewed violence, whenever the effect of the opium is over, and will require augmented doses at every subsequent return. Homœopathy, on the contrary, selects a medicine of like symptoms, (that is, capable of producing the same pain,) and its affinity to the vital organism directs it to the part affected; and the dose being so reduced that its simple primitive operation only is produced, the pain is annihilated instead of concealed, and the cure perfect. If there be costiveness, and evacuations are forced by medicines of opposite symptoms, (cathartics,) they have no tendency to cure the habit; but the medicine must be repeated in increasing doses, and a more inveterate condition of the disease is the consequence. Or if there be diarrhœa, the treatment is only to be reversed and the result is the same. But in these cases, homœopathy chooses medicines having like symptoms with those it is to cure, in doses barely sufficient to neutralize the disease, without making any other impression, and the cure is natural and perfect.

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#### HOMŒOPATHY EXACT AND DISCRIMINATING.

Homœopathy, in the discovery of the principle on which the efficacy of remedies depends, has introduced to the science of medicine a new era, and placed it under the dominion of fixed laws, as the other sciences are. Instead of relying on precarious accident, or vague tradition, or the more uncertain results of experiments on the sick and dying for its knowledge, the properties of medicines are investigated, and new discoveries made in the private apartment of the physician. The medicine is taken by a person in perfect health, and every unnatural impression or feeling it produces is accurately noted.

If it be a new medicine, it is *repeated* by the same and other individuals, till it is certain what are its true and uniform effects. Then the physician enters the sick chamber with full confidence in his remedy, though it may be the first time it has ever been prescribed, because the dynamic laws by which he has tested it, always prove themselves true. He may mistake the exact character of the symptoms of the disease, but if he is correct here, and they correspond with those of the medicine, and it is given in the appropriate dose, he is sure of its effect; it cannot fail to remove the symptoms, if curable at all.

The homœopathic physician, if he would expect success, instead of casting his eye over the patient, feeling the pulse, looking at the tongue, and asking a few general questions, must go into a critical examination of the former habits of disease, the present condition of all the functions, the secretions, excretions, respiration, sleep, intellect, &c., and impress upon his mind a picture of the whole, and seek for its counterpart among the remedies. His skill consists mainly, in getting a clear and definite understanding of the disease. And if he is satisfied on this point, he knows whether he has remedies that will meet the case, and can anticipate, with a good degree of certainty, what will be the result of his prescriptions.

Homœopathy has no general remedies, which an indolent physician can use without study or consideration—none which, by making a general impression, it is hoped will hit the disease. They are all specific and definite, each having its own symptoms, over which it has control, and all symptoms have their appropriate medicines. But in every disease, there is more or less an association of symptoms—a particular state of the vital organization, which modifies the prominent individual symptoms, and this state, ascertained by all the symptoms collected, must be taken into view in the selection of the remedy, or a failure may be expected. For illustration—take pain in the head. It may be accompanied with heat, coldness, throbbing, sick stomach, costiveness, or a great variety of other symptoms, any one of which shows some modification in the character of the disease, and must have an influence in the selection of the remedy. And it is this nicety of discrimination,

that constitutes the difficulty in the practice of homœopathic medicine.

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#### HOMŒOPATHIC TREATMENT OF DISEASES OF CHILDREN.

The human being, at birth, is committed to parents endowed with reasoning faculties, and abundant resources for the comfort and safety of its progeny; and yet the mortality of children is fearfully out of proportion to that of the young of any of the lower animals. Nearly one third part of all that are born are consigned to the grave during the first five years of their existence; and three fifths of these die in their first year. Of all deaths under sixteen, seven eighths are before five years old, the deaths being in an inverse geometrical ratio from birth to puberty, when the ratio ceases. Over so many untimely graves, philanthropy weeps, and asks, can this waste of human life, just as it is entering into existence, be the decree of that Being who has, with such unwearied care, guarded the safety of inferior animals? No. He has made wise and salutary laws for all his creatures. But mankind have disregarded these laws, and, in civilized communities especially, have created for themselves unnatural appetites and habits, and in gratifying them, have vitiated the laws of their nature, and transmitted to their offspring enfeebled constitutions; and the seeds of disease are accumulating from generation to generation. And this effect falls with most severity on the tender age of childhood. And there is no remedy that will fully meet the case, but a return to a life more in accordance with the simplicity of nature.

One great source of this fatality, may be found in the unnatural custom of dressing infants with the arms naked to the body. God has taken care of the young of other animals, by himself providing their covering; but has committed infants of our race to the care of a mother; and she leaves that part naked, which of all others needs covering most. The arms being small and feeble, and at a distance from the centre of the circulation, easily become cold, and the blood coursing its way down through the cold flesh, is reduced in temperature below the standard of health, and returning to the heart

cold, spreads a chill through the system, and predisposes to lung fever, croup and diarrhœa, besides many chronic ailments. But—it is the fashion !

While sickness does and will prevail, it is the province of medicine to render it as mild and harmless as possible. And here we have the two leading systems of practice presented in contrast ; the one or the other to be our guide. The little sufferer has just embarked on the stormy waves of life, in all its frailties and hereditary infirmities, with sensibilities tremblingly alive—the nervous fibrils projecting at every pore ; and every agent, even touch, making an inordinate impression on the irritability of the nervous system, and more or less disposing to disease. This being the state of excitability, its vital organization is too delicately constituted to endure but a slight impression, without sinking under it. And the lining membrane of the stomach and bowels being the centre of excitability, impressions show their effects there. Slight irregularities in diet, exposure to heat or cold, strong mental emotions, &c., produce diarrhœa ; and irritation of this membrane constitutes the most dangerous symptoms in a majority of the diseases of children. And yet with all these facts in view, it is mainly through a strong impression on this membrane, by medicines, whose only operation is to irritate, that allœopathy seeks to cure diseases.

Let the disease be diarrhœa—calomel, opium, and castor oil are the principal remedies. The calomel and oil as cathartic, and the opium to moderate its operation and allay irritation. But where is the philosophy of the cathartic, when the bowels are already excited to the utmost extent of endurance, every particle of their contents is expelled, and it would almost seem, that the inner coats themselves were coming away ? It is hoped that, by making a stronger impression, and of a somewhat different character from that already existing, a change of action will take place, and the disease disappear. And sometimes it does, if there is strength to endure the operation. But it is at best an uncertain and hazardous experiment ; and no one can foretell its results ; and when it fails, it but weakens the patient, and renders the case more hopeless. But homœopathic medicine has no such hazardous effects. If



the disease is curable, it directly displaces the symptoms without additional loss of strength; and if it fail, the patient is none the worse for having taken it.

Again—suppose the disease should be croup or lung fever. In the allœopathic practice, tartar emetic and calomel are the leading remedies in common use, (both medicines heroic enough to satisfy any constitution,) under the operation of which, the most sturdy adults feel deadly sick, and grow faint and pale. And yet these are the medicines for infants; and to them are sometimes added blood-letting or leeching and blisters. And when the child dies, no one can ever say how much the treatment hastened the fatal termination; and sometimes, whether it is dying of the disease or the remedies.

In the homœopathic treatment, there is an entire contrast in all the circumstances connected with the case. Croup, left to itself, often runs into a fatal termination with great rapidity; and while to arrest its progress, allœopathy must push its remedies to the fullest extent of personal safety, and even life itself may be their sacrifice, homœopathy deliberately adapts them to the symptoms individually.

It first selects a medicine, having a controlling influence over that high state of excitement of the blood-vessels and nervous system, which so peculiarly marks this disease, and after a few doses, these symptoms abate. Then if the harsh croupy sound remain in the cough and respiration, another medicine is selected, having a specific effect on that, and it shortly disappears. And then the copious mucous secretion that often follows the croup, choking up the air passages, is removed by another medicine adapted to the purpose. This all looks very simple and easy. And it is because it so nearly follows the laws of nature, which are always simple. The disease is primarily an affection of the spiritual existence, or vital power, or the attack could not be so sudden. It is, therefore, not necessary to break down the physical organization by evacuants, to relieve a disease of the vital power, but simply to use such remedies as are capable of acting on that power in the right direction, and the symptoms will disappear; and if there be inflammation, that too will

pass off, because the vital nervous principle is restored to its healthy action.

In view of the philosophy of homœopathic principles, and the definiteness of its practice, it might be predicted that it would be pre-eminently successful in this most formidable disease. And so it is ; and the same exact, safe and philosophical principles are involved in the treatment of lung fever that have been alluded to in that of croup, and with like success.

Scarlet fever has long been a most deadly scourge to the infantile portion of our race. And allœopathic medicine has too often failed, even to mitigate its relentless ravages. Different plans of treatment have had a short-lived popularity, but not being founded on philosophical principles, and having no rules of adaptation to varied circumstances in the disease, all have at length failed to answer expectations, and each in its turn has been laid aside. And no plan has inspired any general confidence of success, till recently, allœopathy has borrowed from the discoveries of homœopathy, a remedy, (Belladonna,) which it uses with considerable effect, both as a prophylactic to guard against the attack, and a remedy to cure the disease. But homœopathy has far the advantage, in having discriminating rules in prescribing this medicine, and in having other specific remedies for particular symptoms as they occur, accurately adapted to all the varied circumstances that may attend the disease ; while allœopathy prescribes it on general principles only, because it has found it useful in scarlet fever, and not because it has power to remove particular symptoms. Hence, it is relied on, whether these symptoms, or others requiring other remedies, are the prominent ones of the disease.

And again, homœopathy has the advantage of adapting the magnitude of its dose, so as just barely and quietly to neutralize the symptoms without diverting its primitive action from them, as large doses would, by making a strong impression on the whole system.

Homœopathy has still another advantage of no ordinary magnitude. The state of the mind and moral feelings has great influence in the result of the medical treatment. And there is no disease whatever, in which the ordinary prescriptions are opposed with such deter-

mined and persevering resistance, as that of scarlet fever. It is often necessary, at every dose, to pry open the mouth and stop the breath, till an urgent sense of suffocation compels the patient to swallow. And he is constantly kept in a state of perturbation and dread of the next dose. But homœopathic medicine, having no perceptible taste, can be given unperceived in a little cold water, which the child is always fond of taking.

And still another. Homœopathy, professing to be a cure for suffering and pain, and being so pleasant to take, comes to the child as an unmingled good, and the physician as a friend and benefactor, and his little heart kindles with emotions of gratitude, ever afterward, when he thinks of the kindness manifested in his cure. But allopathy is often looked upon as his most deadly enemy, because such nauseous and repulsive doses have been so violently forced upon him.

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#### OBJECTIONS TO HOMŒOPATHY.

“ Oh ! it is all in the diet—there is nothing in homœopathy but the diet ; and its rules for that are good.” But homœopathy has no rules for diet, and lays no rigid restraints on the appetite of its patients, but to refrain from such articles as are in themselves medicinal ; because these interfere with and neutralize the effect of the medicine given. The principal articles of diet in common use prohibited, are—All alkalis, as sal aratus, &c. ; all spices and aromatics ; certain kinds of fish without scales, because they contain train oil, which is a medicine ; smoked meat, because of its kreosote ; food long kept in salt, because it becomes impregnated with chloric acid ; coffee and green tea ; and tobacco also is a great obstacle to the success of homœopathic medicines. Homœopathy has no confidence in any negative temporising plan of abstinence in diet as a remedy for diseases ; but has a more efficient purpose in view—that of attacking the disease itself through its symptoms, by specific medicines that have power to annihilate the symptoms. And a wholesome nutritious diet of such food as is agreeable to the appetite, to give energy to the system, is essential to a successful treatment, especially of chronic diseases.



"There cannot be anything in homœopathy—it is impossible that such infinitesimal doses can have any effect." The time has been when impossibility could be inscribed on almost any subject, and arrest inquiry. But it is too late thus summarily to close up investigation, and in this way put a stop to the progress of the physical sciences. There are no impossibilities acknowledged but such as can be proved so by experiments, because they conflict with the operation of the laws of nature. Truths rest on the evidence their own facts present. And homœopathy cannot be made an exception, and prejudged till it has had an opportunity to present its evidences. It asks the most rigid investigation. And when it claims principles so definite and philosophical, and yet so simple as no other system of practice ever has, it is but reasonable it should be examined before it is rejected, though it may differ from all previous theories.

"What could the homœopathic doses do," it is triumphantly asked, "towards procuring evacuations in a violent case of bilious colic?" As the object is to cure the disease in the most simple, safe and expeditious manner, and forcing evacuations is not among the leading indications, the physician would not be very solicitous about that. Colic consists in spasmodic stricture—the healthy peristaltic motion of the intestinal canal is interrupted, and the circular fibres contract and close up the caliber, and the part above becomes distended with flatus, and painful. It is the object of homœopathy to neutralize the spasm; and a medicine is selected whose symptoms on a healthy person point it out as the remedy—it being capable of producing the same affection. The dose is then graduated so small that it will have no effect on the vital organization generally, its whole energy being directed to the part diseased, because in its primary operation its dynamic affinity is only with the disease. The medicine now occupies the vitality of the part, and its effect is just sufficient to annihilate the stricture—and this being removed, the peristaltic motion regains its integrity, and any offending matter that may be present in the alimentary canal, spontaneously passes off.

Pneumonia, croup, scarlet fever, cholera morbus, &c.

—the diseases that run their course rapidly,—are particularly under the control of homœopathic remedies, because these act promptly and specifically on the symptoms only, directly displacing them, while the vital principle is not called upon to endure the enervating operation of a powerful medicine, superadded to the prostrating effect of a disease, which of itself, is already making too fearful inroads on the powers of life.

“There can’t be anything in homœopathy, because somebody took a whole package of powders at once, designed to last a patient three weeks, and felt no effect from it.” And popular lecturers also make themselves merry with amusing and ludicrous anecdotes about homœopathic medicines, and think they have annihilated the science. But, admitting all to be true, it proves nothing but what is freely granted. The medicines are exceedingly feeble in their operation, compared with the drug shop standard of activity. In the extreme dilutions in which they are prepared in the small globules, the stomach would hardly be capacious enough to contain sufficient to make a sensible impression on the feelings of a healthy individual. And it requires less medicine to impress a function laboring under disease, weakened by it, and having a dynamic affinity between it and the medicine, than would be necessary to affect it in a healthy state.

Again—“Somebody has been taken worse after the use of homœopathic medicines—and it is a dangerous system of practice.” If the medicine had any agency in making the patient worse, it only shows unskillful practice—a failure to adapt the medicines to the symptoms, or a too strong impression on the diseased vitality. Homœopathic medicines, when judiciously administered, never produce a new diseased sensation—it is impossible they should. Every medicine has its peculiar symptoms, which it is capable of meeting, and neutralizing if present. If its symptoms are not present, it should not be given. Sometimes it is difficult so exactly to graduate the dose that, in displacing the symptoms of the disease and establishing its own artificial symptoms in its place, it will not appear, for a little time, to aggravate the case; and the person will feel somewhat worse—but in reality is no worse. The medi-

cine has established an artificial sensation of a higher grade than the natural pain, but it is of the same character, and will soon pass off; and it is the presage of a favorable issue.

Once more. Some one has been sick for months, or years, and having exhausted the resources of the ordinary profession, without effect, resorts to homœopathy, and soon finds himself better. "But, O! it can't be the medicine—he must not have the credulity to think it. It was a natural crisis. The disease was just then ready to get well of itself." Be it so. But it seems very extraordinary that a crisis should so uniformly occur, as it does, whenever homœopathic medicine is given, if it has nothing to do with it. It is this kind of crisis it is calculated to produce, in which the symptoms silently disappear one after another, without any formal parade of violent impressions or debilitating evacuations; and the person soon finds himself better, he knows not how, but knows the fact.

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#### FAILURE OF ALLŒOPATHY TO SATISFY THE DEMANDS OF THE AGE.

Harmony and design prevail throughout the universe—a perfect adaptedness of everything to the object for which it was designed. The air we breathe, the food that sustains our growth and strength—every blessing a bountiful Providence has provided for us, is perfectly adapted to our use, and affords pleasure in its reception. Each seems to have been prepared expressly for the want it supplies. And why should the remedies for our sicknesses and pains be so entirely an exception?

The science of medicine had its origin in the dark ages of the human intellect, and was in harmony with the learning that then prevailed. But a great change has come over all departments of literature. The sciences have been remodelled and placed on different bases. Astronomy, geology, chemistry, &c. now reluctantly acknowledge relationship to the sciences of that period, bearing their names. And no one can shut his eyes to the evidences daily accumulating, that the science of medicine is becoming antiquated, and fails to

satisfy the wants of the community—that there is a lack of confidence in it, and a desire for something different, manifested in the charlatanism and profusion of nostrums that inundate the country. And this dissatisfaction is not confined to a few restless, disaffected individuals, but pervades the more intelligent and influential portions of society.

It cannot be believed that the All-wise Creator has so established the relation between our diseases and the remedies he has so bountifully provided, that the present system of practice is the best the remedies admit of. Who can think that He ever designed enormous doses of poison, so repugnant to all our senses, so painful and prostrating in their operation, and so uncertain in their effect, as the most appropriate remedies? While we are crushed under the weight of disease, we are called upon to take as a remedy, a dose we are sure will sink us still lower, and we know not but will extinguish the last lingering spark of life! There is clearly seen a want of harmony between this and that goodness that has so carefully adapted our blessings to the promotion of our enjoyments.

Sickness and pain are doubtless wisely intended to guard against the abuse of the laws of our nature, in the reception of the bounties of Providence. And the remedies are kindly given as a blessing, to mitigate and control their effects. And our Bountiful Benefactor sends no equivocal blessings, the reception of which may or may not prove our ruin. He has given us remedies, as He has provided materials for all our wants, in their crude state, and left it to us to prepare and appropriate them according to the intelligence He has given us. And judging from the analogy of His works, it must be that the remedies will harmonize with our natures, and be adapted to our diseases, and therefore unmingled blessings. If we do not find them so, it shows a deficiency in the preparation and use of them.

Again—What progress toward the accomplishment of the great objects of the healing art has it made in the two thousand five hundred years it has been cultivated? True—it has discovered many remedies, and greatly enlarged its literature and resources. But a successful application of these resources is the great desideratum

still. While the laws of matter are successfully investigated, and the powers of nature are brought into subserviency to the will of man, and the arts and sciences in general are advancing to a high state of perfection, the physician fails to elevate his profession to an equal standard. The success of the healing art has not kept pace with the progress of the human mind, nor with its own accumulating resources, nor yet with the expectations of this enlightened age. With all its progress in science and learning, its best efforts are still attended with nearly the same disappointments and uncertainty they were ages ago.

These facts strongly argue a defect in the fundamental principles of the profession—a defect which the numberless theories which have been devised for its improvement, have never reached, and never can till it is remodelled and founded on philosophical principles, and the remedies adapted to diseases more in accordance with the natural laws.

No system has yet been devised so much in accordance with these laws as the homœopathic. Discarding all scheming, and accidental discoveries, it relies simply on experiments, for a knowledge of its remedies, and has discovered a principle that seems destined to become the foundation of all medical practice—that medicines will produce the same symptoms in a healthy person, which they are capable of curing when the result of disease. Hence the experiments are performed, and the virtues of medicines ascertained on persons in health. This places it in the power of every physician to prove the efficacy of his remedies, and make it sure, before he administers to the sick. Or, if he has any doubt of the foundation principle, he can subject that to the same test of experiment. This gives the profession of medicine a capacity of improvement, because it has a starting point, and certain facts which never disappoint. The practice will be uniform, and every new discovery will be equally the property of all; for, being based on the fundamental law, it can be used by all.

Homœopathy has another principle, which brings it in beautiful alliance with the laws of nature—that of adapting its doses to the object it has to accomplish. Here we are again reminded of the harmony of the uni-



verse—no waste power—cause unseen, imperceptible—effect powerful, majestic.

In homœopathy, the medicine adapted to the symptoms of the disease being selected, the dose is so reduced as simply to occupy the functions affected, and displace the disease, without making any sensible impression on the vital organization in general. Here the effect is simple and natural, with no debilitating operation to retard or lessen the prospect of recovery.

But those accustomed to allopathic prescriptions, find it difficult to conceive how medicines so exceedingly diluted can have any effect at all. The minute division they undergo in the process of trituration and agitation doubtless greatly exalt their power; and there are dynamic relations existing between them and the vital principle independent of quantity. The laws which govern their action may be analagous to those which control the virus of small pox, hydrophobia, and other malignant diseases. Of those, it is well known, that an exceedingly minute amount, totally imperceptible to the senses, is sufficient to bring the system fully under its influence and develop the disease, and a larger amount can do no more.

Again—We may imagine that the manipulations in the preparation, impart a magnetic influence, on which each medicine impresses its scientific character, and the magnetism being exalted at each dilution, gives the higher developments their peculiar potency and effect as remedies.

But whatever may be the theory, the facts which homœopathic medicines present, are incontrovertible. They do possess a power and a certainty in the treatment of diseases which no other system can claim. In proof of this, let croup, scarlet fever, lung fever, crysipelas, serofula, and other diseases testify,—and let the progress that homœopathic practice though in its infancy, is making in the confidence and affections of the well informed portions of community testify. And if it is still thought the doses are inadequate to the effect, let it be remembered, that, on disputed points, it is a mark of a magnanimous and philosophic mind, before passing unmitigated condemnation, to make a fair investigation of the subject, patiently listening to its claims and evidences.

## HOMŒOPATHY AND ALLŒOPATHY COMPARED.

Does the effect of medicines bear any relation to the diseases they cure, by which it can be known they are their remedies? Observation and common sense answer in the affirmative; and all parties in some sense respond. But while the old, or allœopathic system has founded its practice, so far as it has fixed principle, on the doctrine of applying to the disease, medicines of opposite symptoms; homœopathy takes the ground that the symptoms of medicines must be similar to those of the disease—that a medicine producing a certain set of symptoms on a person in health, will always be the appropriate medicine for like symptoms when they occur in disease, and will quietly and permanently remove them. This being a fundamental principle, it is made the basis of all experiments to discover the virtues of medicines. And these experiments are simple, easy and safe, because performed on persons in health; and very certain in their result, because the person being in health, has no other symptoms to conflict with, and render uncertain those of the medicine; and great exactness is obtained.

Homœopathic treatment is necessarily discriminating. Its medicines being administered in doses so minute, they must be adapted to the symptoms with great accuracy, so as to make an impression, or it will be readily seen they have had no effect; for they are designed to make no impression but on the symptoms. And these being obliterated, the disease itself must necessarily cease. If the medicines do good at all, their effect is soon manifest on the symptoms; at first, it may be, by a slight exacerbatation—the symptoms of the medicine taking possession of the organism occupied by the disease with greater energy.

But no such discrimination in the allœopathic system. It has no medicines adapted to symptoms, or groups of symptoms, and no fixed rules for testing their virtues, or adapting them to diseases, but general experience, under all the disadvantages attending that experience. The first discovery of the medicines was from accident, or some presumptuous experiment on the sick, the result of which no finite mind could have predicted, because founded on no philosophical principles on which to cal-

culate. And having been discovered as remedies, there is still no way of correcting and enlarging the knowledge already possessed, but the same means by which they were discovered. And the sick chamber, with all its confusion, anxiety and pain, is not the place to obtain accurate results. No attempt is made there, to trace out the intimate connection the medicine has with the symptoms of the disease. The patient may recover, but no one can say it was from any agency of the medicine. But very different is the nicely adapted homœopathy, when the symptoms which constitute the disease, being aimed at specifically, are seen to melt away before the potency of its remedies, just according to their ascertained power.

Allœopathy shows by its practice, a want of discriminating knowledge of its remedies, or a want of confidence in their powers. Its prescriptions seldom trust to one medicine alone; but different articles are grouped together in the same dose. This is evidence that no one is known to be exactly fitted to the case; and several are therefore mixed together, hoping that if one fail, another may succeed; or all acting together may produce a favorable result. This makes their operation but indefinite. If two or more medicines be combined in the same prescription, it cannot be known what will be the effect as a remedy; for no one can tell the influence each may have on others in modifying their action. But homœopathy has no combinations of medicines. Each one having a definite specific action of its own, is administered alone. No two can act together without neutralizing each other just so far as they differ.

Allœopathy having no way of improving its skill but by practice on the sick, its progress must be slow and uncertain. And the physician, with no rules for accurate discrimination, must practice on general principles only. An epidemic appears—he reads with diligence the records of past experience, but finds his skill fails and patients die; he goes through with the various plans, prudently devised, with no better success, and is at length induced to enter the mazy wilds of speculation, which he feels himself called upon to pursue, with a boldness commensurate with the malignity of the disease. But suppose he discovers a remedy that stays the progress



of the disease; no principle has been established—the remedy was one of chance—no patient analysis has discovered its relation to the symptoms; and when the epidemic makes its next appearance, it comes with some shade of difference, and the successful remedy shares the fate of others previously discarded, and he finds himself involved in the same labyrinth of uncertainty as before, because the profession itself, in which he is engaged, lacks rules of science. It is a general maxim, which every physician of experience knows to be true, that an epidemic at every subsequent return, must be studied as a new disease, that is, it must be experimented on till a successful method of cure is discovered. But homœopathy, adapting its remedies to symptoms, instead of diseases, traces out these symptoms, and, wherever found, applies the remedy directly for their removal.

In the allœopathic practice, it is often difficult to know the progress the patient is making under the treatment, whether favorable or adverse. A person, for instance, has headache with sick stomach. Under the despotic practice of the old system, no gentle remedy is thought of to act on the vital power, to neutralize the symptoms, and quietly restore harmony of action in the place of disease. But a strong impression is indiscriminately made by evacuants—the whole system is thrown into violent commotion, and under the deadly operation of an emetic and drastic purge, the patient forgets the magnitude of the original malady, and thankful for respite from feelings so deathlike, it would be strange if he did not think himself better. It may be his first symptoms are mitigated, or transferred into some other form of sickness; but he has undergone a shock, from which, it will require time to recover.

The allœopathic medicines, as usually given, possess great power over the vital actions of the system to prostrate, pervert or destroy. But, contrary to common opinion, the power of a medicine to control diseases, when rightly selected, is found to be nearly in the inverse ratio to its action on the system generally, because, if it cures in the natural and only sure way, it is by a direct action on their symptoms. What does the violent operation of drastic medicines do, towards arresting ty-

plus fever or any malignant disease? They only prostrate the powers of life, and render it less able to sustain itself under the effect of the disease. The action of an over dose, may, and often does, so nearly assimilate itself to the disease, or join in harmony with it, that the practitioner, losing sight of the original state of his patient, is no longer able to decide whether he is dying of the effects of the disease or the remedies. Even the most enlightened in the profession, have too many sad recollections, in looking back on past experience, and always must have, while medicines are given in doses that may hasten a fatal termination, should the condition of the patient be a little different from what was supposed. The gradation in the profession, from the loftiest intellect, improved by a long and careful experience, down to consummate ignorance and quackery, is so slight and easy, and the success of all so nearly on a level, the difference is hardly perceived by the community in general. And though this is often thought inconsistent with the wisdom of a discriminating public, on a subject especially, in <sup>fact</sup> they have so deep an interest as the preservation of life and health; yet it must nevertheless be admitted, that talents and experience do not give a physician that superiority of skill and success over ignorance, they inevitably would, were there any thing definite and fundamental connected with the system of practice.

But the medical profession, having done the best they could with a system so incompatible with the laws of nature and destitute of fixed principles, are congratulated on the discovery of homœopathy. To a critical investigation of its principles and practice all are most cordially invited to come, and should they approve, to apply to its advancement and perfection, all their abundant resources and ample science. It does indeed, in its daily practice, require more laborious discriminating investigation, but at the same time, relieves from those dread uncertainties to which the practitioner in allopathy must ever be subjected. And the faithful scientific physician will find its results, a satisfactory reward for the most unremitting devotion of all his powers to this most noble science.

COLBY (ISAAC)

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✓ BY ISAAC COLBY, M. D.



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